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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Bulgaria

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SUBJECT Medical Conditions During and After WWII

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1. Q. Prior to WWII how did the general level of medical research compare with that in the US and UK at that time?
  - A. Bulgaria has always been such a poor country that a high level of research has never been possible. Even research there was more teaching and clinical than it was pure research.
2. Q. Who were the most prominent men in the fields of research which were receiving the greatest emphasis prior to 1940? and what is their competency, age, educational background, accomplishments and general acceptance?
  - A. In the field of physiology Prof [redacted] did important research, particularly concerning the circulatory system in relation to the spleen.

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The new government seemed to follow a policy of keeping some of the outstanding people in the fields of medicine and education, if they demonstrated proper cooperation with the new Red regime. This policy allowed for considerable flexibility, however, and favorites rose and fell from time to time. Some indication of the value of the research of Prof Ocachowatz is given by the fact that his papers have been published in several languages.

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There was also a Prof [ ] who did some good work in the field of pharmacology. He was very capable and worked on new drugs, particularly on gold compounds. It is reported that he is dead.

3. Q. What changes did the new regime institute in the field of medical education and research?

A. At first there was a mixed government composed of Socialists, Radical Democrats and Communists. At that time the Minister of Education was Kosturkoff, an old Radical Democrat, who held office for about a year and a half. In the winter of 1944-45 about 1500 new medical students were admitted in the first class under the new regime. About 1200 were partisan youths who were required to prove that they had spent at least two years in the mountains in the resistance movement. These two years were accepted in lieu of two years study in the gymnasium, and four such years in the mountains were accepted in lieu of a gymnasium diploma, even though the individual had had no gymnasium study at all. They were not only intellectually and educationally insufficient but they were actually a sort of "wild people."

To remain on or get on the medical faculty of a school in 1945 one had to have a certificate from the local Communist Party. Since such certification was denied to upper and middle class faculty members, faculties were paralyzed the war,

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The medical school lecture room had only 150 seats, so the new class of 1500 "students" had to hold its meetings in a nearby movie theater. It was impossible for them to receive anything like a competent training.

4. Q. Do the professors devote full time to teaching, or do they also undertake research?

A. Any extra time they may have from teaching is occupied in consultant practice, so they have little time for research. They badly need the money they receive from this consultant practice.

5. Q. Have you received any information recently as to the general state of health of the people in Bulgaria?

A. Yes. It seems that increasing numbers of people in Bulgaria and in other countries or relations in the West are writing for Streptomycin and Rimifon, which are of course used in the treatment of tuberculosis. This increase in tuberculosis is probably due to lack of food and the overcrowding of cities.

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[ ] my mother has more than ten times mentioned that she is unable to buy milk. Three or four months ago some people [ ] asking for Tetra-ethylene Celamine which is used in the treatment of children for leukemia. That there should be such a shortage of such common drugs as is indicated by the urgent requests received in the US, is a bad sign for the over-all medical picture in Bulgaria.

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